Assuming Way Too Much
Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Internet Sources

Introduction:

A. We are all repulsed by the sin of gossip; it has been that way since Creation
   1. Lev. 19:16; Psalm 50:20; Ez. 22:9
   2. The sin of assumption carries the same credentials as gossip.
   3. Assumption is the mother of gossip, and malice is the father

B. Defining assumption: “An assumption is something that we take for granted
   without bothering to find proof to support it.”
   1. “Assumptions are the termites of relationships.” (Henry Winkler)
   2. “Begin challenging your assumptions. Your assumptions are the
      windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while or the light
      won't come in.” (Isaac Asimov)
   3. “If others tell us something, we make assumptions, and if they don't tell
      us something, we make assumptions to fulfill our need to know and to
      replace the need to communicate. Even if we hear something and we
      don't understand, we make assumptions about what it means and then
      believe the assumptions. We make all sorts of assumptions because we
      don't have the courage to ask questions.” (Miguel Ruiz)
   4. “Thus we use our supposed ‘knowledge’ of others to speak on their
      behalf, and condemn them for their words we ourselves put into their
      silent mouths.” (Margaret George)
   5. “The power of generalizing and the ability to make assumptions gives
      men so much more superiority over dumb animals when it comes to
      making mistakes.” (George Eliot)

C. Assumptions are necessary. We have to assume many things to go about our
   daily lives, because we do not have the time and energy to challenge or to
   worry about every matter that comes our way.

D. What assumptions can do:
   1. Stifle growth and development
      a. Food or a book or a place does not appeal at first glance; person
         doesn’t seem to be someone we want to know
      b. If you dismiss things before learning about them or trying it out
         for yourself, you will miss many chances to become a better
         person or to enjoy life’s blessings
   2. Hinder creativity
      a. When we make assumptions, we place limits on our imagination
         and options. We assume that we must do certain things in a
         certain manner without asking why.
      b. What we end up doing is merely repackaging old, unhelpful
         methods. We remain in our comfort zone and have difficulty
         coming up with fresh ideas.
   3. Cause opportunities to be missed
      a. Prospects, places to go, Projects in Warren - four baptisms
      b. If we assume too many things instead of trying it out for
         ourselves, we will miss opportunities.
4. Cause erring beliefs
   a. Old wives’ tale that eating carrots can help you to improve your vision? Getting wet from the rain could cause you to catch a cold? Send this email to ten people immediately and Bill Gates will give you a million dollars?
   b. What will old assumptions keep us from learning about the word of God?

5. Cause errors in judgment and action
   a. Up until the 1800s, doctors believed that bloodletting was good for treating any type of ailment. Based on this faulty assumption, many doctors bled their patients to death instead of curing them. If the patient managed to survive, his body had to work doubly hard against the ailment and the loss of blood.
   b. When we persist in wrong assumptions, we view events from a flawed perspective and make errors that can end up causing harm to others and ourselves

6. Cause misunderstandings
   a. We have a tendency to make assumptions about everything. The problem with assumptions is that we believe they are truth
   b. We make assumptions about what others are doing or thinking, we take it personally, and then we blame them and react to what we have imagined they said or think
   c. We often see only what we want to see and hear only what we want to hear. We don't perceive things the way they are; we literally dream things up in our imagination. Because we are afraid to ask for clarification, we make assumptions and then defend our assumptions vehemently
   d. Making assumptions in our relationships is asking for problems.
   e. The way to keep from making harmful assumptions is to ask questions. Have the courage to ask questions until your understanding is clear.
   f. Once you hear the answer, you will not have to make assumptions because you will know the truth.

E. Not all assumption is sin
   1. Dangerous situations
   2. Routine business transactions
   3. Unimportant matters unrelated to relationships, the word of God, safety, business, laws civil and natural

I. SINFUL ASSUMPTION
   A. Dogmatic conclusions without facts in evidence - Prov. 29:1; Heb. 3:8-11
   B. Pointless assumption - Prov. 18:13; Judges 15:1-2
   C. Prideful assumption - 2Kings 5:9-14
   D. Assumption based on weak or malicious character - Gen. 45:3-5; Psalm 50:21
II. THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF SINFUL ASSUMPTION
   A. Sinful assumption claims godhood (omniscience)
   B. Sinful assumption exalts the self by measuring himself against others’
      imagined faults.
   C. Sinful assumption claims God’s prerogative of knowing the mind of another

III. HOW TO OVERCOME SINFUL ASSUMPTION
   A. Realize it is sin: Repent, confess, and pray for forgiveness - 1John 1:6-10
   B. Remember that God is all-knowing and you are not
      1. Leave knowing the minds of others to Him
      2. If you cannot resist the urge to assume what others are thinking, get
         help from a mental health professional
      3. When an assumption pops up in your mind, recognize it for what it is: a
         gossip seed
   C. Renew your mind through God’s word daily - Phil. 4:6-9
   D. Remember that others are learning and growing in the faith just like you; be as
      compassionate toward them as you want them to be toward you
      1. Matt. 7:12; Gal. 5:13-15

Conclusion:
   A. We can get sidetracked thinking and talking about the physical descriptions of
      Hell, a place where physical things do not exist. Instead our time would be well
      served thinking about the things that won’t be there. If I persist in the sin of assumption, I will
      be there, but my brethren about whom I made assumptions will not. And the tragic irony is
      that I my heart will ache to the breaking point missing them. I will remember all of the
      endearing things about them, and my speculations about what they were thinking or
      saying will be viewed as the second greatest mistake of my life. I will spend eternity
      mourning the loss of fellowship with same people I thought in life was out to get me.
   B. What makes more sense: to believe evil things about my brothers and sisters
      who have given me more than enough proof of their love, or tell the Adversary who is
      whispering in my ear to Shut up and get out!?